

## **LASSEN COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS/ROAD DEPARTMENT**

**Reason for Inquiry:** Public Interest

**Inquiry Procedures:** On November 12, 2009 the Grand Jury interviewed Mr. Larry Millar Director of Public Works and Director of Public Transportation.

**Background:** Mr. Millar furnished the Grand Jury with a written "Overview of the Public Works Department" which gave a relatively complete picture of the operation of the Department.

**Findings:** The Department appears to be well organized and managed. As with all County departments, budget constraints dictate the extent of activities within various divisions.

**Commendation:** Mr. Millar came to the Grand Jury well prepared for his interview and demonstrated that he has a significant understanding of his department and his duties.

**Recommendations:** Continue working with Diamond Mountain Casino to arrive at a memorandum of understanding regarding the County roads that service the Casino and some land near Herlong. This effort is to encourage the Casino, et al for the mutual benefit of all parties.

**Response Required:** None

The Lassen County Department of Public Works is comprised of five (5) main divisions which include Roads, Public Works, Transportation, Surveyor and Natural Resources. These main divisions are further broken down into the following units and/or budget units:

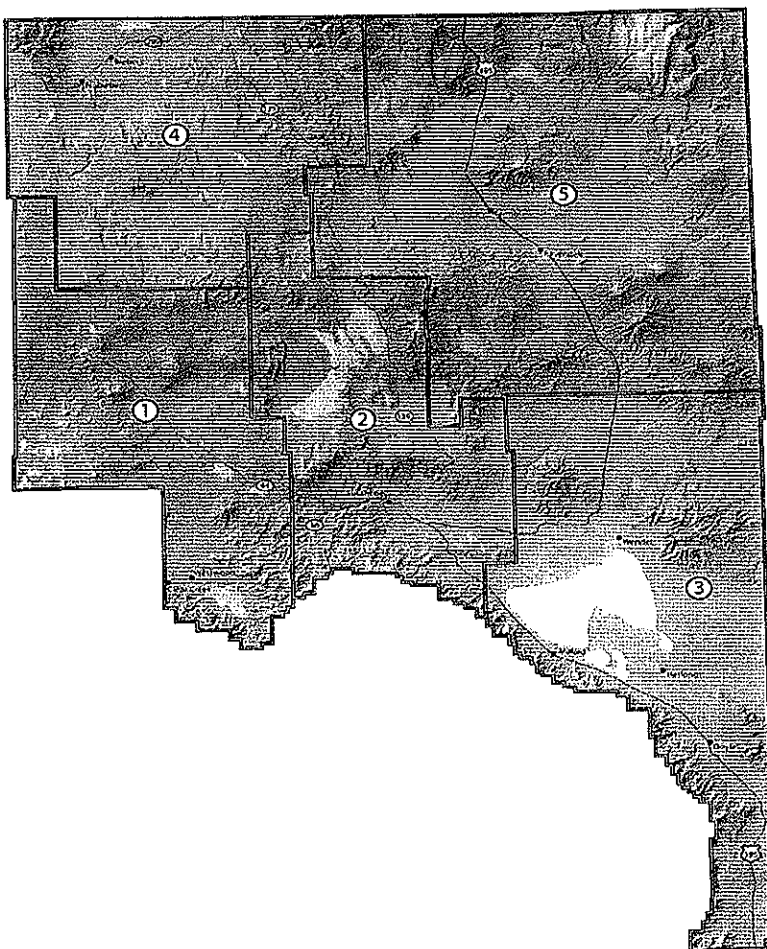
- 1) Road: (Operating, Construction, Traffic Relief)
- 2) Public Works: (Building and Grounds, Parks, Animal Control, Rabies Control, Cemeteries, Aviation, Capital Projects)
- 3) Transportation: (Local Transportation, Lassen Transit Service Agency, Local Transportation Fund Account, State Transit Assistance Fund Account)
- 4) Surveyor: (Surveyor)
- 5) Natural Resources: (Susanville Ranch Park)

**The Department of Public Works overall Mission Statement is as follows:**

*"Department of Transportation/Public Works is charged with the responsibility to plan, design, construct, operate and maintain the public roads, bridges, facilities (buildings), drainage, parks, airports, cemeteries and public transportation of the County as well as administer and manage the animal control, rabies control and surveying functions for the County and the public. This overall mission is to protect the health and welfare of the public and to preserve the County's infrastructure investment."*

**Road Division:** The Road Division includes the Road Operating Budget, the Road Construction Budget and the Traffic Relief Budget.

The Road Operating Budget is responsible for the day to day administration, operation and maintenance of the County Road System which currently consists of 881 miles (2008 County Maintained Road Mileage) and 59 bridges. This includes the labor force of 39.65 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) as well as the equipment and vehicles. The overall County is divided into five Road Districts which are similar to the Supervisor District Boundaries



The Department utilizes a mix of purchasing materials from outside vendors and County manufacturing in order to do the most for the limited dollars available to maintain the County roads and bridge system. The Department is also responsible for snow removal, flood control and assisting with other natural disasters. Funding consists of restricted State and Federal funds with no General Fund contribution.

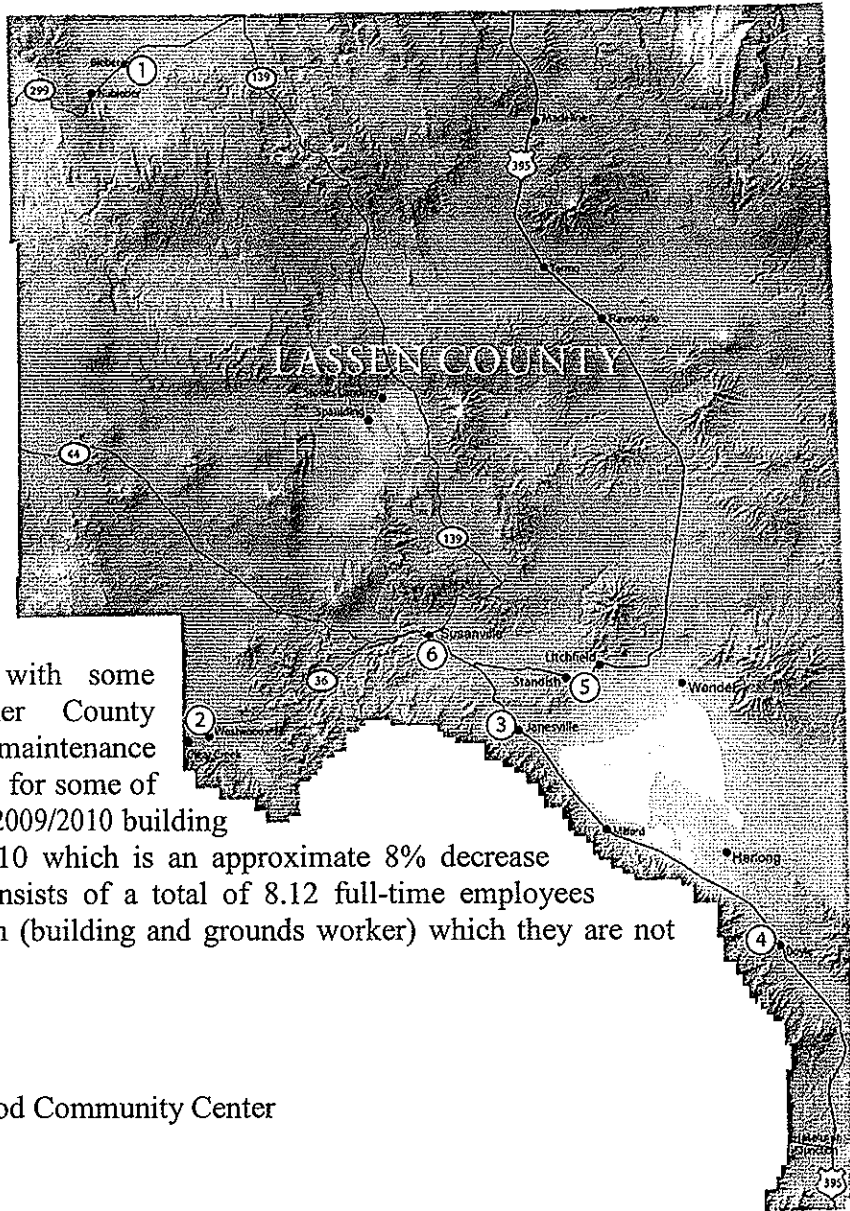
The current FY 2009/2010 road operating budget is \$6,574,846 which is approximately the same as last FY. The department currently has four (4) vacant positions (two (2) in engineering and two (2) on the road crew) which they plan to not fill until funding becomes more stable.

The **Road Construction Budget** includes rehabilitation and construction projects within the County Maintained Road System which utilize State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funding or other State and Federal Funding. These types of projects may consist of asphalt concrete overlay projects, bridge and road rehabilitation projects, bridge replacement projects and new road construction projects. The current FY 2009/2010 road construction budget is \$9,131,613 which is an approximate 5% decrease from last FY. Projects included within this year's budget are Skyline Road Extension, Leavitt Lane Bridge replacement, Lambert Lane Bridge replacements (2 structures) and the Termo-Grasshopper overlay project. The Termo-Grasshopper project was funded with stimulus funding.

The **Traffic Relief Budget** includes projects which utilize Traffic Relief Funding. These projects include asphalt concrete overlay projects, chip seal projects and maintenance projects. Generally, the Department utilizes this funding for materials and utilizes the Road Department equipment and labor force to maximize the amount of work which can be accomplished. The current FY 2009/2010 traffic relief budget of \$1,200,064 is for the anticipated proposition 42 funds that are expected. These funds will be utilized for a chip seal project for Richmond Road and Gold Run Road.

The Public Works Division is further divided into Building and Grounds, Parks, Animal Control, Rabies Control, Cemeteries, Aviation and Capital Projects.

The Building and Grounds Division is responsible for the administration and facility work for the maintenance, custodial and minor construction/ remodeling of Lassen County's facilities (buildings and grounds). These include facilities located throughout the County. In addition, this Division provides custodial and general maintenance services to several Leased Buildings. The Building and Grounds Division is responsible for the utilities for the majority of the County facilities. Funding is through the General Fund with some reimbursement through other County Departments for specific maintenance projects and through rental fees for some of the buildings. The current FY 2009/2010 building and grounds budget is \$894,710 which is an approximate 8% decrease from last FY. This budget consists of a total of 8.12 full-time employees (FTE) with one vacant position (building and grounds worker) which they are not planning on filling.



#### Lassen County Buildings

- 1) Bieber Library
- 2) Westwood Library, Westwood Community Center
- 3) Jolly Elders
- 4) Doyle Community Center
- 5) Standish 4-H
- 6) Campfire USA, Agricultural Administration, Alexander Street, Courthouse, Courthouse Annex

The Parks Division is responsible for the administration, maintenance, and construction of park facilities within Lassen County. As the majority of the park facilities have been constructed utilizing State Park Grants the County is required to maintain them in a safe and operational condition. Funding for the day to day maintenance of these facilities is through the General Fund for services and supplies while the labor force is through the Building and Grounds Division and through Inmate Work Crews. The current FY 2009/2010 parks budget is \$25,470 which is an approximate 16% decrease from last FY.

## LASSEN COUNTY PARKS

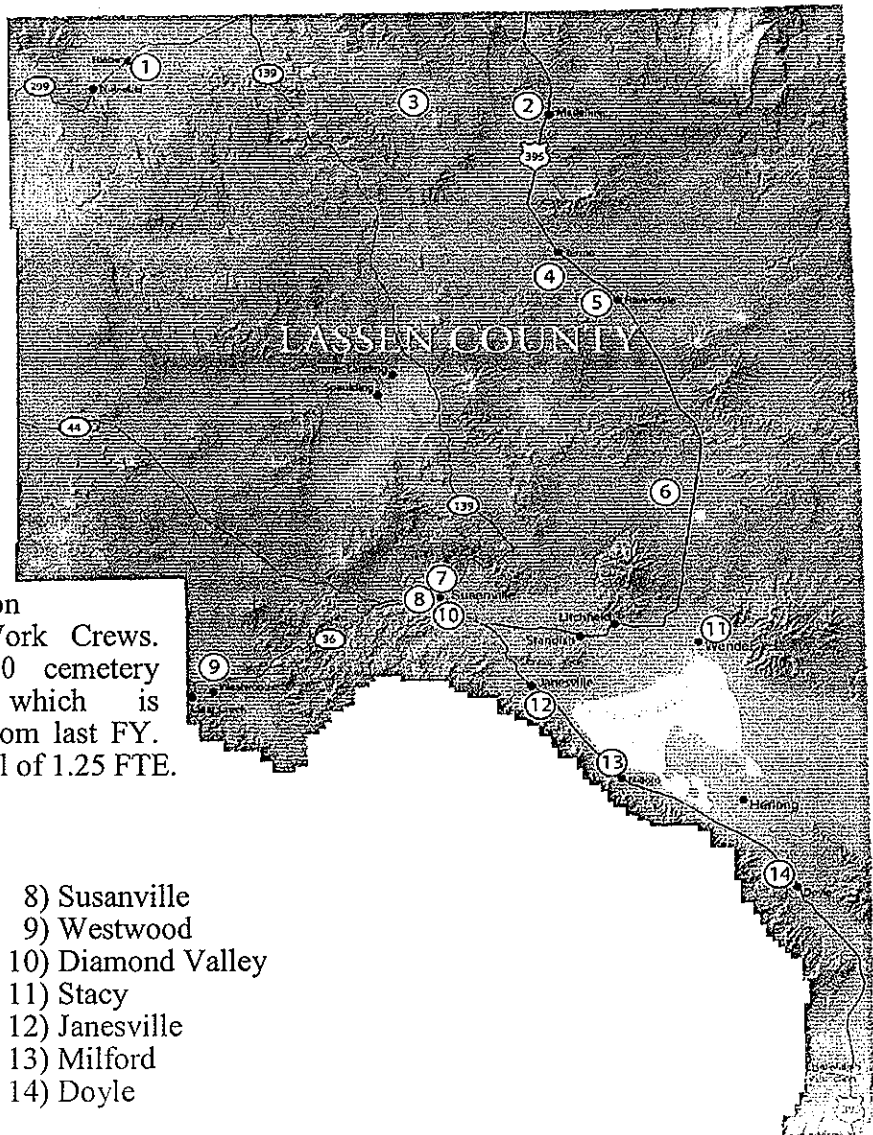
- 1) Beiber
- 2) Little Valley
- 3) Stones Boat Ramp
- 4) Spalding Boat Ramp
- 5) Lake Forest
- 6) Susanville Ranch
- 7) Johnstonville
- 8) Janesville
- 9) Lake Leavitt
- 10) Milford
- 11) Cowboy Joe
- 12) Dixon
- 13) Doyle
- 14) Clear Creek



The **Animal Control Division** is responsible for the administration and operation of the Animal Shelter for the County and the City of Susanville. This includes assisting the Rabies Control Division with the licensing and handling of dogs and cats and public health and safety as it relates to animals. Another major role is to oversee the Adoption Program for dogs and cats. This Division is responsible for the utility costs and other expenses in operating the Animal Shelter. Funding consists of a General Fund contribution in the amount of 60% of the annual budget for the County and 40% from the City of Susanville. The current FY 2009/2010 animal control budget is \$134,895 which is an approximate 16% decrease from last FY. This budget consists of a total of 1.5 FTE.

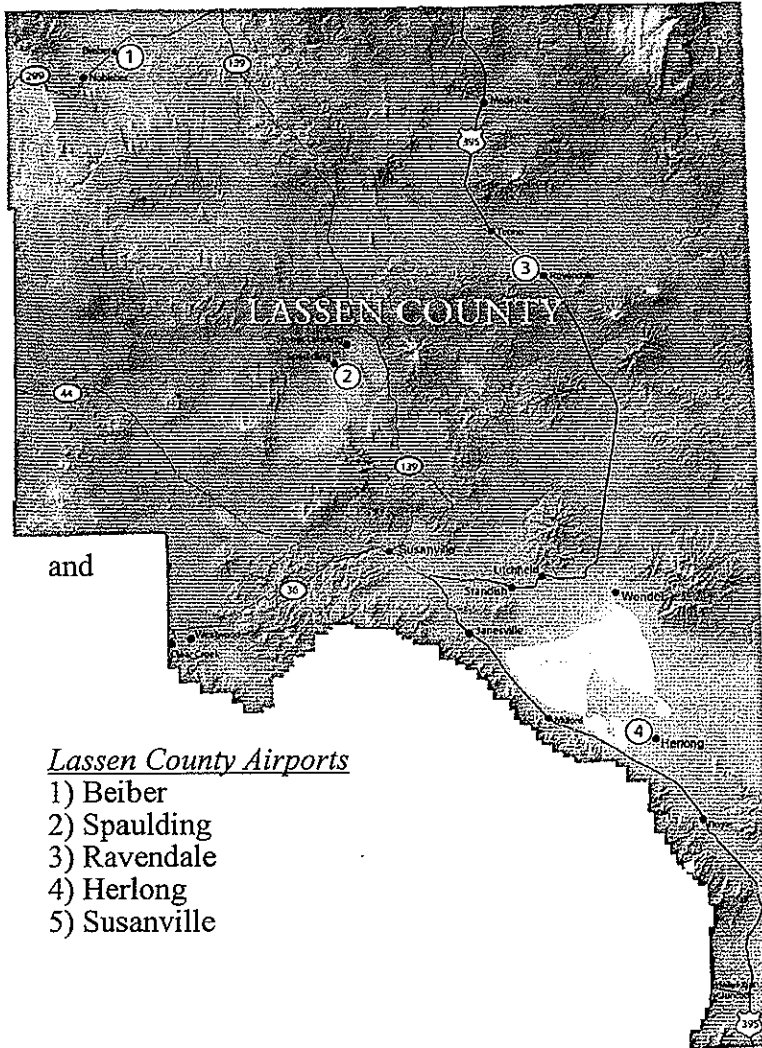
The **Rabies Control Division** is responsible for the administration and operation of the animal control program for the County. This program is responsible for the protection of the public health and safety by assuring that all dogs and cats are vaccinated and licensed for rabies. It is also responsible for the handling of complaints regarding vicious and dangerous animals, picking up stray, injured, sick or dead animals, removing stray and abandoned animals, and providing assistance with other problems associated with the control of animals. Funding consists generally of State funding with General Fund contribution when necessary. The current FY 2009/2010 rabies control budget is \$124,978 which is approximately the same as last FY. This budget consists of a total of 2.1 0 FTE.

The **Cemetery Division** is responsible for the administration, maintenance and operation of Lassen County's fourteen cemetery sites located throughout the County. This Division is also responsible for the utilities at each of these facilities. Funding consists of a portion of property taxes and revenues from the sale of grave sites, however, a General Fund contribution is generally also required to meet the annual budget. This Division also relies heavily on assistance from Inmate Work Crews. The current FY 2009/2010 cemetery budget is \$148,370 which is approximately 1 % down from last FY. This budget consists of a total of 1.25 FTE.



#### Lassen County Cemeteries

- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1) Bieber        | 8) Susanville      |
| 2) Madeline      | 9) Westwood        |
| 3) Ash Valley    | 10) Diamond Valley |
| 4) Dry Valley    | 11) Stacy          |
| 5) Ravendale     | 12) Janesville     |
| 6) Secret Valley | 13) Milford        |
| 7) Lassen        | 14) Doyle          |



Lassen County Airports

- 1) Beiber
- 2) Spaulding
- 3) Ravendale
- 4) Herlong
- 5) Susanville

The **Aviation Division** is responsible for the administration, operation and maintenance of Lassen County's four airports located throughout the County (see **attached map**). This Division is also responsible for the utilities at each of these facilities. Funding consists of State Funding for the day to day operation and State and Federal Grants for capital improvement projects. The current FY 2009/2010 aviation budget is \$384,288 which is an approximate 5% decrease from last fiscal year. This budget consists of a total of 0.15 FTE and funding for two improvement projects (Spaulding airport widening and Ravendale airport crack sealing stripping).

The **Capital Projects Budget** is responsible for the administration of Capital Projects for the County. This includes significant building maintenance, renovation or improvements as well as the current park projects under the 2002 Park Bond Grant. Funding consists of State and Federal funds as well as some General Fund contribution. The current FY 2009/2010 capital projects budget is \$703,000 which consists mainly of the completion of park improvement projects (Janesville, Lake Forest, Leavitt Lake, Doyle and Spaulding) which were funded through a Per Capita State Park Grant.

The **Transportation Division** includes the Local Transportation Budget, Lassen Transit Service Agency Budget, Local Transportation Fund Account and the State Transit Assistance Fund Account.

The **Local Transportation Budget** is responsible for the administration and planning of transportation for the Lassen County Transportation Commission (LCTC) which is a joint commission of the City of Susanville and Lassen County. County employees act as support staff for the Lassen County Transportation Commission. These salaries as well as operating expenses

are paid out of this budget. The majority of the funding for this budget is through Regional Planning Assistance (RPA) funding as well as Local Transportation Funds. The current FY 2009/2010 transportation budget is \$652,631 which is approximately the same as last FY. This budget unit consists of a total of 2.37 FTE which is up slightly from last FY.

**The Lassen Transit Service Agency Budget** is responsible for the administration, operation and maintenance of the Lassen Rural Bus System and the administration and planning for the Lassen Transit Service Agency (LTSA) which is a joint agency of the City of Susanville and the County of Lassen. County employees act as support staff for the Lassen Transit Service Agency. The LTSA contracts with MY Transportation, Inc. to provide the operation of the Lassen Rural Bus System which consists of a fixed route with complementary Dial-a-Ride service to the City of Susanville and routes from Susanville to Herlong, Doyle and Westwood areas as well as with Lassen Senior Services for specialized transportation services to the elderly and disabled. In addition, the LTSA contracts for taxi services. The funding for this budget is through Transportation Development Act Funds in both Local Transportation Funds and State Transit Funds. Additional funding is also provided through Federal Assistance Funds. The current FY 2009/2010 LTSA budget is \$2,715,654 which is an approximate 30% increase over last FY. The increase funding is contributed to the receipt of some grant funding and stimulus funding we were successful in obtaining for the purchase of 2 replacement buses and for some capital work to the bus shop (adding security fencing and adding on to the existing shop facility with an additional shop bay).

**The Local Transportation Fund Account** was created to track the Local Transportation Fund. Revenues from the Local Transportation Fund (1/4 cent local sales tax) from the State are received in this account and then are subsequently distributed to eligible claimants which are Lassen County, City of Susanville and the Lassen Transit Service Agency. The current FY 2009/2010 LTF budget is \$2,301,883 which is an increase over last FY due to the additional grant and stimulus funding.

**The State Transit Assistance Fund Account** was created to track the State Transit Assistance Funds which are distributed throughout the State to transportation planning agencies. These funds are received into this account and then are subsequently distributed to eligible claimant's which is the Lassen Transit Service Agency. This funding may only be used for transit. The current FY 2009/2010 STA budget is \$356,214 which is an approximate 14% decrease from last FY. This is due to a decrease in State revenues.

**The Surveyor Division** is responsible for providing services to the public and various governmental agencies and in providing the mandated review of Final Maps, Parcel Maps, Record of Surveys, Corner Records, and Legal Descriptions and their conformance with State and Local Ordinances. In addition, the Division is responsible with coordinating of the physical address system for the County. Staffing consists of County employees to complete the day to day operation of the Division and the use Consultants to provide the function of Deputy County Surveyor and the final review and stamping. Currently this Division must contract out for the services of County Surveyor as they have been unable to successfully retain a Licensed Surveyor on staff. Funding consists of fees for providing these services as well as General Fund contribution providing these services. FY 2009/2010 surveyor budget is \$132,402 which is approximately the same as last FY. This budget has a total of 1.07 FTE.

The **Natural Resources Division** is responsible for providing administration, maintenance, construction and planning for the Susanville Ranch Park which is a 1,100 acre shared use recreation area. In addition, this Division is responsible for overall trail planning and coordination for the entire County. Funding consists of contributions from BLM, County of Lassen and the Lassen County Transportation Commission. The current FY 2009/2010 natural resources budget is \$110,604 which is an approximate 20% decrease from last fiscal year, mainly due to lack of some grant funding they were able to obtain in last year's budget. This budget unit has a total 1.0 FTE.